

# EDUCATION

## When in Doubt, Sit it Out

Research indicates that 40 percent of high school athletes who suffer a concussion return to play too soon. I sponsored a new law, often called “When in Doubt, Sit it Out,” which will help protect student-athletes by requiring those with suspected concussions to sit out the remainder of same-day play. If a concussion is confirmed, student-athletes must receive medical clearance before playing again. The law also improves training for coaches and staff so they can recognize the symptoms of a concussion and take action.



## Helping Connecticut Schools Race to the Top

The Obama administration’s Race to the Top program made \$4.3 billion available to states that reform public education. To meet that challenge, we approved a landmark education bill that uses technology to track students’ academic growth, creates new teacher accountability standards and provides options to fix failing schools. With these reforms Connecticut will be better positioned to secure Race to the Top funds to close the achievement gap and to ensure that our graduates can compete in the global economy.

## Standing Up For Vocational-Technical Schools



Vo-tech graduates contribute mightily to a well-trained, highly qualified, experienced workforce. That’s why I worked with my colleagues to help reform the system and ensure that it has adequate resources. For too long the 10,000 students enrolled in vo-tech high schools have endured understaffing, shortages of classroom and shop supplies, inefficient transportation and virtually no budgetary oversight. The new law will bring increased transparency to vo-tech budgeting and heightened sensitivity by the state Board of Education to the needs of these schools.

## Protecting Wintergreen Magnet School

Wintergreen Magnet School is one of the most successful and diverse public schools in Greater New Haven. Six hundred students from Hamden and New Haven as well as other communities take advantage of the school’s unique curriculum and dedicated teachers. Unfortunately, proposed cuts in the state budget threatened to shut down the school—or at the very least require local taxpayers to pay much more. I fought hard this past year to ensure that Wintergreen receives adequate funding to preserve this excellent magnet school.



Dear Neighbor,

The 2010 session of the General Assembly was particularly challenging as we worked to balance the state budget and to stimulate job growth despite the ongoing national recession.

A major achievement centered upon passage of our historic bipartisan jobs bill. The initiative helps businesses secure access to the capital and credit that they need to thrive. We also made Connecticut an easier place to do business by streamlining the regulatory and permitting process.

We tackled the budget deficit in the same way. By working together, we balanced the budget without raising taxes or cutting municipal aid. In addition, we passed significant health and education legislation to enhance the quality of life in our state.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you as Connecticut continues on the road to recovery.

Sincerely,  
*Martin Looney*  
Martin M. Looney  
State Senator

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# STATE SENATOR **Martin M. Looney**

## Serving New Haven & Hamden

SUMMER 2010

## THE BUDGET

### Working Together to Balance the Budget

The 2010 legislative session began with the state facing a projected deficit of more than \$1.2 billion for the current two-year budget. Despite the daunting task of closing the deficit, we were able to work together in a bipartisan fashion with the governor to balance the budget. We did it without raising taxes or cutting municipal aid. Instead, we cut state spending by hundreds of millions of dollars, reduced borrowing and worked hard to maximize federal funding.

Additionally, we took aggressive action to cut \$422 million in previously approved projects this year—bringing us safely under the bonding cap while preserving credit and helping to control future debt.

I'm also pleased that we were able to protect critical investments in education, job training and health care. This included providing adequate funding for trade programs at our technical high schools, including Eli Whitney in Hamden. Another important program protected was the Children's Trust Fund that provides crucial services to families with the goal of preventing child abuse.

Connecticut's fiscal challenges aren't over, but by reducing borrowing and cutting spending now we're better positioned for the future.



## ENERGY REFORM

### Lowering Energy Prices

I voted for landmark energy reform legislation this year—the most

important in over a decade—that targeted a 15 percent reduction in our electric rates, increased our commitment to Connecticut-based renewable energy generation, consolidated various state energy entities and provided assistance for state residents to make efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their own homes. Unfortunately, these important measures were vetoed by the governor.



## GROWING JOBS

### Connecticut's Landmark Jobs Bill

There was no greater priority this legislative session than helping Connecticut create high-quality jobs. We worked with Governor Rell to do just that. Some economists call our landmark bipartisan jobs bill the most important jobs initiative that the General Assembly has ever considered.

Provisions of the new law include:

- ▶ Loans and lines of credit for small businesses to help fund expansions, additional hires or new equipment
- ▶ Sales-tax exemptions for machinery, supplies and fuel used in renewable energy industries
- ▶ Loan reimbursements and training grants for education and careers in green technology, life sciences and health information technology
- ▶ Pre-seed financing and technical services to businesses developing innovative concepts
- ▶ Tax credits for angel investments in bioscience, photonics, information technology and green technology businesses

This law—developed out of deliberations by the Majority Leaders' Job Growth Roundtable which I co-chaired—is an example of achievement made possible when business leaders, academics and small-business owners from across the state come together with one common goal: help Connecticut grow jobs.



Announcing the findings of the Majority Leaders' Job Growth Roundtable.

### Helping Small Businesses in Tough Times

Small business is the engine that drives Connecticut's economy. With that in mind, we retroactively extended tax exemptions to business owners in targeted investment communities and enterprise zones that have purchased machinery and equipment used for manufacturing, biotechnology or recycling. I'm happy to announce that businesses located in New Haven qualify for this tax exemption.



## SENIORS

### Helping Seniors Survive the Recession

The effects of a recession on seniors can be especially profound. Fortunately, we were able to pass several laws which help reduce health care costs, keep seniors in their homes and protect them from scam artists. The General Assembly:

- ▶ Reduced the 15 percent co-pay on the Home Care Program for Elders to 6 percent. The reduction will save the average client in the program nearly \$100 per month on co-pays.
- ▶ Reopened the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program to provide respite services for caregivers.
- ▶ Protected the privacy of those who participate in senior center programming by exempting personal information from the Freedom of Information laws. This means that information including addresses and telephone numbers won't be available to the public.



Hearing from constituents at the Miller Senior Center in Hamden.

## HEALTH CARE

### Helping Patients Get Answers

When health insurers deny your claim it's easy to feel confused and frustrated. Now, when health insurance companies deny coverage for procedures because they claim they're "not medically necessary" or "not a covered benefit," they must provide patients with contact information for the Office of the Healthcare Advocate where staff can help patients determine if they have been wrongfully denied coverage and take appropriate action.

### Ensuring Cancer Patients Get the Care They Need

Cancer patients can now take oral doses of chemotherapy to help them fight the disease, but these new medicines can be very expensive, and some insurance companies have been unwilling to fully cover the costs. Most insurance policies fully cover intravenous chemotherapy and this new law requires parity for the two strategies. Cancer patients can now rest assured of comparable insurance coverage for each chemotherapy protocol.

